

THE FAIR PLAY.

SMITH & WATKIN, Publishers.

STE. GENEVIEVE, - MISSOURI.

HERE AND THERE.

A SINGLE grain of wheat, accidentally dropped in a garden in Hovingham, England, last spring, produced 63 ears, and more than 3,000 grains of wheat, probably the largest yield ever known, but showing what good soil and good cultivation can accomplish.

THERE is said to be in Paris at the present time an Alsatian peasant woman who carries her hair on her arm like a train, as it is seven feet and a half in length. She is 52 years of age, but her hair still grows.

DR. PETERMAN, the great German geographer, expresses himself satisfied that the diamond fields at Zimabaye, Africa, are identical with the Ophir of the Bible from which King Solomon is said to have conveyed gold and ivory and precious stones for the construction of the temple. The place now possesses ruins and extensive piles of buildings of unquestionably remote antiquity.

THE Baltimore dealers in terrapins keep them in nearly air-tight chests, packed layer upon layer, and deprive them of food. They grow fat under this treatment, although the fatness doubtless is the result of disease. They must each measure seven inches across the under shell before they are considered fit for the table, and are then sold at \$24 a dozen.

THE chair occupied by George Washington as Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge at Alexandria, Virginia, is now in the possession of Unanimity Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons at Edenton, in that State, whither it was sent during the war of 1812 for safe keeping. It is of massive mahogany, elaborately carved and a fine specimen of antique furniture. An effort will be made to induce its custodians to allow this memento of the illustrious "man and Mason" to be placed on exhibition at Philadelphia next year.

GEORGE SCOTT JEFFREY, telegraph operator at Waynesburg, Penn., and Miss Lydia Culler, ditto at Brownsville, were married by telegraph the other day, the officiating clergyman at Waynesburg reading the ceremony to the groom, who telegraphed the same to the bride, who responded by wire. This is the second marriage by telegraph in that part of the country, a lady of Pittsburgh and a gentleman of Rome having been united in the same manner, four years ago, by Bishop Dominic.

IN New York and vicinity there are upwards of 500 florists, with an aggregate invested capital of \$10,000,000, including real estate. Ten have a capital of \$50,000 to \$70,000. One firm that employs 50 hands is now growing more plants than all the florists of New York did thirty years ago. The fashions in carnations are past, and tuberoses and violets now seem to be in favor. There are less flowers used at parties than formerly, and for funerals a profuse display is becoming tabooed, being unnecessarily expensive and not tasteful when used in excess. The latest novelty is preserved flowers, imported from Germany, and used in floral devices.

THE postal arrangements in Turkey are probably the most convenient for employees in the world. These gentlemen are not troubled with racks, pigeon-holes and windows. Distribution is unknown. The mail-carrier simply takes his bag into a large hall, empties its contents into a large flat basket, opens the door to the public, retires to the corner with his pipe, and the scramble of the people for letters commences, every body making a rush for the flat basket. The rates of postage are based on the distance traversed, as eight cents for the first 100 hours, sixteen cents for 200 hours, and so on.

A GENTLEMAN named Wall, residing at Phenixville, Penn., says the Reading Eagle, has several very fine canary birds which he has given much attention. One of the birds he has taught to sing "Home, Sweet Home," clearly and distinctly. His mode of instruction is as follows: He placed the canary in a room where it could not hear the singing of other birds, suspended its cage from the ceiling, so that the bird would see its reflection in a mirror. Beneath the mirror he placed a musical box that was regulated to play no other tune but "Home, Sweet Home." Hearing no other sounds but this, and believing the music proceeded from the bird it saw in the mirror, the young canary soon began to catch the notes and finally accomplished what its owner had been laboring to attain, that of singing the song perfectly. Mr. Wall has been offered and refused \$20 for this yellow-throated soprano.

A RUNAWAY BOY'S STORY.

He Tells of Eight Years' Experiences Among the Natives of a South Sea Island.

THE Toronto Globe recently printed a curious story told concerning one John S. Renton, of his alleged captivity on a South Sea island. Subsequently, Mr. John Esson, of Bayfield, Canada, who claims to be a native of Orkney and to personally know Renton's father, a tailor in the town of Stromness, sent to it the first letter written by Renton to his parents after his release. It reads as follows:

BOWEN, QUEENSLAND, Sept. 7, 1875.—Dear Father and Mother: Hoping you are still alive and well, I take this my first chance of writing to you that I have had for these last eight years. You must be glad to know by this that I am still living and in the best of health, after living eight years on an uncivilized island in the South Seas, having had many narrow escapes from death by sickness as well as from getting killed by the natives. The last letter you had from me was dated at San Francisco. I did not go in the Pacific, as I wrote you, but went in an American ship called the Reynard, of Boston. Sailed from San Francisco for McKean's Island, to take a cargo of guano for Georgia.

When at McKean's Island, I, along with four of the ship's crew, took a whale-boat belonging to the island and ran away from the ship as she was very leaky, deep-loaded, and had a very bad crew to round Cape Horn with in the winter. We had an old Baltimore sailor who had been among the islands before. He advised us to run away with him, saying it would only take a day or two to reach the island—we intended going to where there were plenty of vessels calling. We missed this island, and our stock of provisions soon got finished. After twenty days we had nothing to eat or drink for five days, and that, too, under a very hot sun. Rain came at last—when by spreading our sails we got our two casks filled. Killed a shark by a harpoon we had brought with us, made a fire in the boat and cooked it the best way we could. After being thirty-five days in our open boat, we were picked up by the natives, trading in their canoes to some other part of the island. Taking away every thing we had, they left five of the natives with us, who brought us to their village. Two or three hundred of them gathered together, never having seen a white man before. Some of them wanted to kill us. Next day they separated us to different villages some twenty miles apart. I lived with the strongest chief on the island, named Calough; he liked me very much and did not want to let me go away.

I soon learned their language and ways, and went about stark naked. They do not wear the least bit of clothing; never go anywhere without their spears, tomahawks and bows and arrows, every day fighting, one tribe against another, cutting off each other's heads for ornamenting their huts. I had to go with them sometimes, and saw dreadful sights. I was very handy at making their canoes and nets, planting yams, cutting down trees, etc. I never got down-hearted. My old companion soon died. I understood, and the natives told me that one of them had been killed by the tribe he stopped with. I never saw any of them after our separation. Four years ago some slavers came along our coast. The natives going off in their canoes to trade, the slavers shot some of them, sank their canoes, and, putting out their boats, picked up the natives, who were in the water, and carried them off as slaves.

This made the natives quite savage, and I being the only white man on the island, they offered many prizes to the chief for me, that they might kill and eat me. They all agreed to this except my chief, but he liked me too much to allow it. Six months after this they captured two vessels and killed the crews. This was at the other end of the island, which is about 100 miles long, and named Malata, one of the Solomon group, about 1,100 miles from the island we had left—rather a long distance to come in an open boat, with only a box of biscuits, four hams, two small kegs of water, tobacco, matches, etc. On Sunday, 8th of August, of this year, I was taken off the island by the crew of this vessel, who were well armed in their two boats. On coming ashore the natives were afraid to come too near, in case they might get shot. But Captain Murray made them presents of pipes, tobacco, calico, etc., and the next day they let me go away. The day after the vessel sailed we stood back again, when I got the chief to come aboard. The captain, showing him the cabin, gave him some more presents. This being the first ship he had ever seen, he was quite surprised. I got twenty of his tribe to come along with me. They are going to Queensland

to work for three years for money, when they can buy any thing they like, when they shall be sent back again to the island. I speak the language as well as the natives. The captain of the vessel that took me off is a very nice man; he belongs to Hilo, in Scotland. He came out here three years ago; his wife and children are living in Brisbane. He wishes me to go back with him to the island, as by speaking the language I might be useful to him, and I have no objection, as it is the only thing I can do meantime. If you were to see me now you would not know me. I am almost as black as a nigger, but since commencing to wear clothes I am getting white again. I hope we shall meet soon, as I should like so much to see home and friends once more, but it will have to be in the summer, as I could not stand the cold in the winter. With heartfelt gratitude to God for his preserving mercies in the past, I am your affectionate son,

(Signed) JOHN S. RENTON.

It would appear from other letters, that Mr. Wade, Government agent at Brisbane, is anxious to secure the services of young Renton to assist in opening up and carrying on a friendly intercourse among the islanders where he has so long been a captive.

A Newly Wedded Couple in Distress.

IN Nashville, Tenn., a few days ago, an addition to the guests of a Cherry Street boarding-house was made in the shape of a newly wedded couple from somewhere up along the Cumberland. The husband paid marked attention to his wife, and numerous little extravagances and talks were a source of pleasure and amusement to all. Three days passed blissfully away, and the husband suddenly developed an idea by which he could fleece a landlord out of a little bill, and thus correspondingly benefit his pocket. So, calling his wife to one side, he communicated to her the fact that he was destitute of cash, and unfolded a little plan by which they might leave the house and the trusting landlord be none the wiser. Secretly as much as possible of their baggage about him, he casually dropped in, intending to wait at a neighboring corner for his wife, and then proceed to the wharf where he had engaged passage on a steamboat. After a trilling day, sufficient as she thought to allow spicilion, she started to follow the wil husband. But, unluckily, before she could reach the door the landlord interposed, informing her that she could not leave until the bill was settled. Her title fiction regarding her object in going out, and at last her tears, made no impression on the cautious landlord. Three hours or so, in came the husband, putting on as good a face as possible for a man who had kicked his heels at a corner for that length of time. The landlord demanded the amount due on the little account, but the man protested that he had not a cent in the world. In that case, the landlord said, kindly recourse was to be taken on the part of his wife. This cornered the husband, and he put on a look of thoughtfulness. The fair partner of his bosom, however, was still defiant. After a few minutes of cogitation, the chap's hand found its way to his pocket, and as swiftly found its way back, bringing forth, however, his book of wealth. The required amount was extracted, and the couple left the house, but not too quick to escape the laughter of those who had been fortunate enough to witness the fun.

A Wanderer's Return.

WM. A. M. Thompson, of Quariz Valley, left for home in Iowa last week. The old settler has been absent from home twenty-five years, and during the whole time he has never heard from his family, nor they of him, and they had supposed him dead. He has been afflicted with rheumatism for several years, and some of his friends here opened a correspondence with his people a short time since, which has resulted in their seeing for him. He is now seventy-four years old. When he came to California he left a wife and nine children, a now, after twenty-five years' absence, he returns to find the family circled by death. He finds to welcome him his wife, the nine children, his grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.—Sacramento (Cal.) Record, Dec. 21.

THEY have a ordinance in the South African diamondfields to regulate the liquor traffic and in wisdom exceeds any thing of the kind in this country. If a man goes into a saloon to get a square drink of whisky he cannot go through a side door or go out of the back door after he has primed himself. He must walk rough the front door and reappear tough the front door. If he gets out a other way the saloon-keeper is fined 90 promptly.

Palaces for Paupers.

Governor Tilden of New York, in his annual message, takes occasion to ensure somewhat severely the prevailing custom in that and some other States of building magnificent buildings in which to lodge the State's prisoners. Four institutions of charity are now being erected in that State—three asylums for the insane and one reformatory. A year ago \$2,750,000 had been expended on them, and \$450,000 more appropriated, remains to be expended, and yet no considerable part of these works has been made available. When they are completed the Governor estimates they will have cost as much more as has already been expended on them—say \$6,000,000. The outlay will have been about \$5,000 for each pauper patient, or \$25,000 for every family, or group of five persons. This, the Governor declares, "is unreasonable and extravagant. How many families of laborers and thrifty producers can afford to live in a house costing \$25,000?" he asks. In 1850 the average cost of stone dwellings in the State was \$10,000, or \$2,000 for each inmate; the average cost of the brick dwellings was \$6,000, or \$1,200 for each inmate; and the average cost of the wooden dwellings was \$1,100, or \$220 for each inmate. Commenting on these facts, the Governor says:

"I deny that there is any sound public policy in erecting palaces for criminals, for paupers, or for the insane. A style of architecture simple and fitted to the nature of its object, would reconcile artistic taste with justice towards the industrious producers, on whom falls the burden of providing for the unfortunate. Waste in such edifices is not only wrong to the tax-payers, but by just so much it consumes the fund which the State is able to provide for the objects of its charity.

"Nor does the mischief stop with the completion of costly dwellings. The State still has to provide for the support of their inmates. By an inevitable association of ideas in men's minds, magnificent homes lead to magnificent current expenditure. The pride of officers and managers, and of local admirers, and of the zeal of benevolence, are freely indulged, where they are gratified without expense to those who are swayed by them."

Russia's Commercial Crisis.

The London Times in a recent financial article publishes the following: "It seems from recent articles in the Moscow Gazette that great stagnation prevails in the grain trade in Southern Russia. Russian agriculture and commerce are threatened with a collapse. The chief among the causes of this is the keen competition of America. Since the civil war in that country the British import of American wheat has increased until it stands now where the Russian importation stood in 1867. When Russia sent out forty-four hundredths of her total import and the United States only fourteen hundredths. In 1873 the United States sent out forty-four hundredths and Russia only twenty-one hundredths. This does not represent a decrease to that extent of Russia's total exports—on the contrary, they have slightly increased. But America's exports have increased much faster. The causes are declared chiefly to be America's superior transit advantages, her virgin soil and her more scientific agriculture. The Gazette therefore urges Russian agriculturists to use new land, to use better appliances and more skill, but says that cheaper inland transportation is the chief need. The Gazette's Odessa correspondent writes that Odessa was never at such a standstill since its foundation. No transactions are effected and bankruptcy follows bankruptcy. Houses have failed to thirty-hundredths of their entire value in the city, and wheat is lying in the storehouses. The Gazette says this condition of affairs is largely influenced by the misplaced activity of private banking-houses, which made credit absurdly easy and cheap. This occasioned a storm of feverish speculation and created ephemeral undertakings. Now forced to curtail credits, they have reduced to the most awkward position many who thought such things would last forever."

"An association called 'The Bible Institute' has been formed in Philadelphia by Protestant Episcopalians, for furthering the increase of knowledge upon Biblical subjects. A course of lectures is to begin Feb. 11.

AN Alabama Grange has appointed a committee of review, the duty of which is to visit the farms of the members monthly, and make a report before the Grange as to their condition, improvement and general management.

BROKEN friendships may be soldered, but never sound.

WIT AND WISDOM.

EVERY couple is not a pair. Liveness is the foe of freedom. Speak dilly or be silent wisely. Who best can suffer best can do. Ours good mother is worth a dozen school-masters.

A GOOSE's quill often hurts more than a lion's claw.

IN seeking the good of others we find our own.

A GOOD book and a good woman are excellent things for those who know how to appreciate their values. There are men, however, who judge of both from the beauty of the covering.—Buffalo Courier.

"WHY don't men swear when they are alone?" asks Talmage. Did Mr. Talmage ever lay around the fence-corners and see a lone farmer pick up a humble-bee? What did that farmer say?—Detroit Free Press.

A CHINESE cook, with a butcher's hatchet as sharp as a razor, will, in ten seconds, thoroughly bone and skin a fish, so that not a particle is wasted. He will also give you an unbroken orange full of ten different kinds of jellies.

"Joux," said Mrs. Smith, "what smell is that?" "Cloves," "But that other smell?" "All-spice." "But isn't there another?" "Yes—apples." "And just one more?" "Cider, my dear." "Well, John," said she, "if you'd only drink a little brandy now, you'd make a good mince pie."

"MARCH of Refinement," 1875—Brown (behind the age, but hungry): "Give me the bill of fare, waiter." Head Waiter: "Beg pardon, sir?" Brown: "The bill of fare." Head Waiter: "The what, sir? O!—ah!—Yes!—(to subordinate)—Charles, bring this—this—gentleman—the menu!"—Punch.

THE death of Dean Hook, in England, has revived a good story wherein the very reverend gentleman was associated with the late Bishop Wilberforce. One of the favorite conundrums of the last-named prelate was this: "What articles of ladies' attire," the Bishop used to ask, "give the names of the two most eloquent men in the Church?" Of course such a question could not be easily answered, but Dr. Wilberforce gleefully furnished the reply, "Hook and I."

CODE DE LE BEARD. Whenever you get a code of beard, De best thing to do is to go to bed. Put first a hot water soak your feet, Ad drink hot tea, take dot too sweet. You will have very discolored life; Its dose, its turbot, its anguish ad strife Before your histable soul will bock, Till you find would prefer the sheet to bed. Your eyes with water will overflow, Ad your dose—ah! that is the awful blow!— With ache ad ache ad grow thick ad red, Ad you'll feel like a foot ad wish you were dead. Don't waste your wife; let her soothe your pain; She'll wash you ad love you, though all fit vain. Perhaps—oh! perhaps she will take a hot rub, Ad tick you up daisy for high ad lub. Ad so to sleep. Good night, good night! The world now tells before your sight, Good bye, by wife, by babies dear; I ad dot dead, but sleeping here. —(Anaph).

Made a Mistake in His Man.

An insurance agent called into an establishment on Main Street the other day, with a large account book under his arm, and walking up to the proprietor in a business sort of a way, he inquired, "How's business—how's stock?" "Oh, business is very, very dull," returned the tradesman. "Pon my word, sir, I haven't got \$900 in the house! Terrible dull!" and he paused and looked inquiringly at his visitor. "Only \$900?" said the insurance man in surprise. "Pon my soul, sir," repeated the dealer, "I don't believe there's a dollar more—look for yourself," and the man looked sad and sighed. "Then, sir," said the insurance man, with a good deal of warmth, "how does it come that your stock is insured in our company for \$1,500, eh?" "Oh! ah! beg your pardon!" exclaimed the dealer, in great confusion; "I thought you was the tax man! I was sure you was the tax-gatherer, or 'pon my soul I wouldn't assaid that, when, in fact, my stock is worth fully \$8,000—look for yourself, sir!"—Dayton Democrat.

Saved by Her Corset.

On last Saturday afternoon as a young lady who resides with Mrs. Grubbs, mother of T. F. Grubbs, Steward of the Allegheny Poor Farm, was walking up Federal Street, in front of the Allegheny City Building, she felt something strike her suddenly on the left side which pained her quite severely for a short time and caused her to stagger against the fence in front of the City Building. At this time a boy came to her and inquired if she was hurt and said that he did not intend to hurt her. She did not know what it was that hurt her, but went to her home and there found a bullet lodged in one of the bones of her corsets directly over her heart, and also found a small blue spot on her side under where the bullet had lodged. She can thank those corsets for saving her life.—Pittsburgh Gazette.